

**Approved Minutes
Vermont Downtown Board
09/22/2014**

Calvin Coolidge Conference Room, 6th Floor, National Life Bldg., Montpelier

Members Present:

- ☒ Noelle MacKay (*chair*), Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- ☒ Amy Bell for Chris Cole, Agency of Transportation
- ☒ Jen Mojo, Agency of Natural Resources (by phone – joined after the Colchester New Town Center discussion)
- ☒ Robert Sponable for Michael Desrochers, Department of Public Safety
- ☒ Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- ☒ Peg Elmer Hough, Smart Growth Appointee
- ☒ Elizabeth Finlayson, VT Association of Chamber Executives
- ☒ Charles Jacien, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (departed after Colchester New Town Center discussion)
- ☒ Michael McDonough, Gubernatorial Appointee from Bennington
- ☒ Ron Redmond, Gubernatorial Appointee Representing Downtown Organizations (arrived after approval of minutes)
- ☒ Michael Munson, Vermont Planners Association
- ☒ Melanie Kehne for Ron Shems, Natural Resources Board (departed after Montpelier Growth Center Review)
- ☒ Peter Gregory (*vice-chair*), Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (departed during Montpelier Growth Center Review)

Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members: Richard Amore, Caitlin Corkins, Chris Cochran, Annina Seiler, Faith Ingulsrud and Gary Holloway.

Guests: Brian Shupe, Vermont Natural Resources Council; Alice Merrill, Plainfield Select Board; Will Colgan, Plainfield Planning Commission; Dan Noyes, Wolcott Planning Commission; Meghan Rodier, Lamoille County Planning Commission; Seth Jensen, Lamoille County Planning Commission; Sarah Hadd, Colchester Planning and Zoning Director; Dawn Francis, Colchester Town Manager; Bart Frisbie, Sterling Construction; Patrick O'Brien, S.D. Ireland; Robin Jeffers, S.D. Ireland; Mike Miller, City of Montpelier Planning Director; Kimberly Cheney, Montpelier Planning Commission.

Chair Noelle MacKay brought the meeting to order at 1:02 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6th floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

1. Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2014

Peter Gregory made a motion to approve the draft July 28, 2014 minutes and Michael Munson seconded. Michael McDonough requested that the announcement of the August Board meeting be altered to note cancellation rather than postponement and that the description of Board members present include more detail regarding appointment for Ron Redmond and himself. The motion to approve the July 28, 2014 minutes passed 11-0.

2. Public Comment Period

Noelle MacKay opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

3. Overview of Public Street Tree Policy – Amy Bell

Amy Bell of VTrans presented an overview of the Draft Public Street Tree Policy. She highlighted existing issues and maintenance concerns, the revised draft policy, connections to state designations and asked for Board feedback and comment. Examples from the [Landscape Guide for Vermont Roadways and Transportation Facilities](#) were provided for review. Concerns were raised regarding cost, impact on storm water and maintenance, and jurisdiction. The Board discussed a possible role in monitoring maintenance agreements. One member did express concern about the Board taking on this VTrans responsibility. The Board praised the Agency for their work on this issue.

4. Village Center Overview and New Applications – 2 – Richard Amore

Richard Amore presented the Village Center Summary identifying suspensions, upcoming renewals and anticipated new applications.

Town of Plainfield – Plainfield Village Center

Richard presented the complete application from the Town of Plainfield for Village Center designation. He noted that the Town was formerly designated and worked closely with staff to create the proposed boundary. The application is complete and Plainfield's Town Plan meets the ACT 59 statutory requirements. Staff recommends approval of the application for Village Center designation.

Michael McDonough raised concerns regarding the inclusion of the Park & Ride within the designated boundary. Will Colgan and Alice Merrill spoke on behalf of the application noting that the sidewalk extends to the Park & Ride which also serves as a trail-head parking. Board discussion ensued and concerns were raised regarding bonus points for certain grant programs if the Park & Ride was not included.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve the application for Village Center designation for Plainfield Village Center with revision to the eastern boundary removing the cemetery, Park & Ride and 2 residential parcels. Michael Munson seconded and the vote passed 7-5.

Town of Wolcott – Wolcott Village Center

Richard presented the complete application from the Town of Wolcott for Village Center designation. He noted that the Town worked closely with staff to create the proposed boundary. The application is complete and Wolcott's Town Plan meets the ACT 59 statutory requirements. Staff recommends approval of the application for Village Center designation.

Dan Noyes addressed the Board and elaborated on the closing, Buck's Furniture, in the Village of Wolcott and how redevelopment incentives and designation benefits might benefit the community.

Charles Jacien made a motion to approve the application for Village Center designation for Wolcott Village Center. Peg Elmer Hough seconded and the motion passed 12-0.

5. New Town Center and Growth Center –Town of Colchester – Sarah Hadd & Dawn Francis

Sarah Hadd, Director of Planning, and Dawn Francis, Colchester Town Manager provided an update to the Board. Colchester has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the developer of the New Town Center to ensure that a public building is built and used in conformance with the New Town Center requirements. Board members expressed interest in additional time to review the MOU though concerns were raised as to the level of commitment which it expressed. A lengthy Board discussion ensued and members asked for more detail regarding lease terms, capital plan, and the implementation timeline. Dawn proposed presenting the Board with a stronger MOU at the November Board Meeting which would address these concerns and provide the Board with a clear timeline for exploration, commitment and execution. Brian Shupe commended the Board for their work to bring the designations into compliance with the law and for their work assuring the Board's reviews and decisions are consistent and fair.

Michael Munson made a motion to extend the period for review of the New Town Center renewal until the November Board meeting while allowing benefits to remain in effect. Ron Redmond seconded and the motion passed 12-0.

6. Growth Center Review– City of Montpelier– Mike Miller

Mike Miller, City of Montpelier Planning Director, presented a review of the Growth Center designation to the Board noting significant progress on the zoning and comprehensive plan updates. Board discussion followed and concerns were expressed regarding the size of the designated area and the existing zoning. Planning Commission Chair, Kimberly Cheney, responded to Board comment and noted that the city will continue to work to address these concerns.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to accept the review and require the city to report in 1 year. Michael Munson amended Peg's motion to require as part of the annual review a summary of zoning revisions and comprehensive plan updates which address concerns raised regarding the size of the boundary, the auto-dependent nature of some of the area within the boundary, and density concerns along with a timeline for adoption of both. Ron Redmond seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Amy Bell, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Peg Elmer Hough, Elizabeth Finlayson, Michael McDonough, Ron Redmond, Robert Sponable, Michael Munson, Melanie Kehne, and Noelle MacKay. Motion carried.

7. Old Business/New Business

- **Announcements:** there were no announcements.
- **Review Tax Credit Process and Policy:** Due to time constraints the Board will continue the discussion of the tax credit process and policy at the next Board meeting. Noelle provided a quick overview of the issue noting that a Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit applicant was unhappy with the Board decision and the Board will review the applicants concerns and Board process and policy.

8. Adjourn

Noelle Mackay made a motion to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Amy Bell, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Peg Elmer Hough, Elizabeth Finlayson, Michael McDonough, Ron

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Redmond, Robert Sponable, Michael Munson, and Noelle MacKay. Motion carried. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Annina Seiler